

THE
COMMON SCHOOL JOURNAL.

VOL. VIII. BOSTON, OCTOBER 15, 1846. No. 20.

PROGRESS OF EDUCATION IN NEW HAMPSHIRE.

WE rejoice to see some signs of educational life in the State of New Hampshire. Sections of the State, for some time, have been contending bravely; but the State, as such, until the present season, has stubbornly resisted improvement. Now, however, it has *begun a beginning*.

There is no State in the Union that can boast a more vigorous growth of men than the "Granite State." Were culture equal to endowment, her sons and daughters would be among the *magnates* of the land. Here has been her deficiency. She has not worked up her stock with a skill corresponding to its quality. This skill can only come through educational institutions; it can only reach the mass of the people through well-conducted Common Schools.

At the late session of the New Hampshire Legislature, several laws were enacted, which show that the labors, for years past, of such men as Hale, Abbott, Leonard, Livermore, Cummings, and Moore, have not been in vain. By one of these laws, a Commissioner of Common Schools is annually to be appointed. Among his duties are the following: To prepare blank forms and questions which are annually to be transmitted to the school committees of the respective towns, to be by them filled, answered and returned; to spend at least twenty weeks in each year in visiting the different counties, delivering addresses, &c.; to make an annual report, containing the substance of whatever information he may obtain, with such suggestions of his own as he may deem useful, and to present the same to the Legislature in a printed form. We are sorry to see that provision is made for an edition of only six hundred of the Commissioner's reports. In Massachusetts, the law provides for an edition of five thousand of the reports of the Board of Education, and such an edition never supplies more than half the calls that are made for them.

By another law, school committees are debarred from receiving any compensation for their services, until they shall satisfy the selectmen that they have attended to the duties and made the reports by law required of them.

Another enactment authorizes any town in the State to raise a sum, not exceeding five per cent., in addition to what they are now empowered to raise, which five per cent. may be applied to the support of a Teacher's Institute within the county. This law is rather better than nothing, provided it does not have the effect, — of which there is danger, — to postpone the enactment of such a one as Massachusetts has, and as every State should have.

On the whole, the enactments of the Legislature of New Hampshire, at its late session, though not what we should have been glad to see, are nevertheless encouraging. Though a short step, it is in the right direction. It has performed something, and it promises more. The provision made for acquiring and diffusing information will be the basis of intelligent action, and will demonstrate the necessity of further effort. The rudiments of an organization are formed, and these rudiments will expand and strengthen into symmetry and vigor.

We rejoice at the position now assumed by New Hampshire, hardly less on account of other States than on its own. Every new State that builds up this cause within its borders becomes a buttress of strength to all those which have before established it. It was doubtful, for years, — if any good thing can, in the providence of God, be eventually doubtful, — whether the cause of Common School reform, in Massachusetts, would be able to stand, or was doomed to fall. The impulse given to other States, and the reaction of that impulse upon ourselves, has been of inappreciable service to us. New York has made a series of most splendid improvements, and each of them has helped Massachusetts beyond our gratitude to recount. Vermont has reorganized its whole school system, establishing a State Superintendent for the State, and a county superintendent for each of the counties within it. By the energetic and successful labors of Mr. Barnard, public opinion in Rhode Island has been revolutionized. Maine has now established a Board of Education, a little different in its structure, but, in its duties, identical with that of Massachusetts. And now New Hampshire has inscribed "Progress" upon her banner.

One only of the New England States proves recreant to duty in this glorious cause, — the State of Connecticut! Favored, for half a century, in the munificence of her endowments, beyond any of her New England sisters, she is the only one which, for the last few years, has not merely been stationary, but has absolutely retrograded; and now, if she promises to be useful at all, it is as a warning, and not as an example. A common ancestry, an identity of general interests and pursuits,

a similar position in regard to the other States of the Union, and a similar duty to furnish them with high example and encouragement, had led us all to expect that we should have, not only the sympathy, but the active coöperation, of Connecticut, in this common cause. We not only expected it, we *believed* it. Events seemed auspicious. The year after the Massachusetts Board of Education was established, an organization almost identical in its form, and entirely so in its object, was created in Connecticut. For carrying out its measures of reform and improvement, an agent was selected, — Henry Barnard, Esquire, — of whom it is not extravagant to say that, if a better man be required, we must wait, at least, until the next generation, for a better one is not to be found in the present. This agent entered upon his duties with unbounded zeal. He devoted to their discharge his time, talents, and means. The cold torpidity of the State soon felt the sensations of returning vitality. Its half-suspended animation began to quicken with a warmer life. Much and most valuable information was diffused. Many parents began to appreciate more adequately what it is to be a parent. Teachers were awakened. Associations for mutual improvement were formed. System began to supersede confusion. Some salutary laws were enacted. All things gave favorable augury of a prosperous career. And it may be further affirmed, that the cause was so administered as to give occasion of offence to no one. The whole movement was kept aloof from political strifes. All religious men had reason to rejoice that a higher tone of moral and religious feeling was making its way into the schools, without giving occasion of jealousy to the one-sided views of any denomination. But all these auguries of good were delusive. In an evil hour, the whole fabric was overthrown. The Educational Board was abolished. Of course, the office of its devoted and faithful Secretary fell with it. As if this were not enough, the remedial laws which had been enacted during the brief existence of the Board, and which might have continued and diffused their benefits without the Board, were spitefully repealed.*

The whole educational movement in Connecticut, or rather, the body in which the vital movement had begun, was paralyzed by this stroke. Once or twice, since, it has attempted to rise, but has fallen back prostrate as before.

Two or three years ago, a Legislative commission was appointed, of which the Rev. Joel Hawes, of Hartford, was chairman, who were instructed to report upon the condition and needs of the Common Schools in this State. In pursuance

* We have been credibly informed that the chairman of the Committee on Education, in the Connecticut House of Representatives, who reported the bill for abolishing the Board, *not being able to draw up a decent report himself*, paid an involuntary homage to the cause of learning which he was about to stab, by employing another to draft a report for him

of their official duty, this commission sent circulars to all the school societies in the state, earnestly requesting information and suggestions. If we rightly recollect, only about *thirty* answers were received!! The rest were too dead for any larum, though it warned of a danger more terrible than pestilence or fire. In a Prize Essay "On the necessity and means of improving the Common Schools of Connecticut," written, during the current year, by the Rev. Noah Porter, Jr., of Springfield, he says, "In 1845, it is not known that a single town or school society, in the State, raised a tax for school purposes, by voluntary taxation. In a few of the large city districts, a small property-tax is collected, and applied to the wages of teachers, but not amounting in the whole State to \$9000, or three cents to each inhabitant, or ten cents to each child between the ages of four and sixteen." The State school fund yielded about \$1,40 to each child in the State between the ages of four and sixteen; and this, with the exception of the pittance above mentioned, constituted the educational *Exchequer* of Connecticut! During the same year, the amount with which the towns of Massachusetts voluntarily taxed themselves, for paying the wages and board of teachers, and providing fuel for the schools, was more than \$3 for every child in the State between the ages of four and sixteen. Besides this, the voluntary contributions of individuals for board and fuel, were about \$40,000. This sum was exclusive of all income from the State school fund, which fund now amounts to almost a million of dollars.

In the Prize Essay above referred to, Mr. Porter uses the following powerful, oburgatory language, — enough to make the ears of the people to tingle: "But Connecticut! where is Connecticut, the mean while? Where is she, who was once the star of hope and guidance to the world? She was the first to enter the lists, and was the foremost in the race. Is she foremost now? Whatever may be the truth of the case, it is certain that she is not thought to be so in the other States. It is the general opinion, *out of Connecticut*, that she is doing little or nothing; and whereas, a few years since, her name was mentioned in connection with Common Schools with honor only, it is now, in this connection, coupled with expressions of doubt and regret, and that by wise and sober men. Her large State endowment is described as having put her effectually asleep, as having sent her to 'Sleepy Hollow,' from the influence of which, when she is aroused for a moment, it is to talk of her noble school fund and James Hillhouse, just as Rip Van Winkle did of his neighbors who had been dead forty years. The school fund is quoted every where, *out of Connecticut*, — we venture to say it is quoted in every other State in the Union, — as a warning and example, to deter them from giving the proceeds of their own funds, except only on the

condition, that those who receive shall themselves raise as much as they take, and report annually as to the results. Those who go from other States into Connecticut can hardly credit the testimony of their own senses, when they are forced to believe the apathy that prevails. Every newspaper, and lecturer, *out of Connecticut*, high and low, ignorant and knowing, sneers at the Connecticut School Fund, and the present condition of the Connecticut Schools." Such is the language of a friend! And yet, in this degenerate and disgraceful condition of things, Connecticut raises, by voluntary taxation, for the support of schools, but *three cents*, on an average, to each inhabitant! In the State of New York, a phrase is current, which, if it wants courtly elegance, has, at least, gigantic vigor. To express, at once, the idea, and the sentiment of detestation against that niggardliness which opposes schools because of their cost, they ascribe such sordid meanness to the power of the "Almighty Dollar." In Connecticut, it is the "Almighty Three-pence"!

Alas! with what lamentations shall we mourn over this fallen State! Amid the radiant sisterhood of New England, she has lost her queenly place. The brightest jewel upon her brow is fading; pallor has settled upon her cheek, and the arm that once pointed to the goal of improvement hangs nerveless by her side. If she does not soon arouse herself from this lethargy, and stimulate her heart to quicker pulsations, and transfuse a more glowing tide of life into her icy veins, she will be beyond the reach of remedy, and her resuscitation will require a miracle.

THE AITCHES AND THE HOES. — An English merchant, whose name was *Ogton*, always called himself by the degrading appellation of *Hogtown*, following the Cockney practice of adding an *h* in speaking, when it was necessarily omitted in writing. He called repeatedly at the post-office, to inquire if there were "any letters for John Hogtown;" and the invariable reply was, "None, sir." "Very strange!" said he, one day, as he began to feel uneasy about his bills of exchange; and he requested the clerk to examine again. The merchant's eye followed him, and he observed that he was looking among the letters beginning with *H*. "Olloh!" cried honest John, "what are you doing there? I said John Hogtown." "I know it, sir, and I am looking for John Hogtown. There is nothing for you, sir." "Nay, nay!" shouted John, "don't look among the *aitches*; look among the *hoes*." And among the *O's* John Ogton's letters had been accumulating for months.

A **FOR** is like a cinnamon-tree, — the *bark* is worth more than the body.

TRUTH. — Truth will ever be unpalatable to those who are determined not to relinquish error, but can never give offence to the honest and well-meaning ; for the plain-dealing remonstrances of a friend differ as widely from the rancor of an enemy as the friendly probe of a physician from the dagger of an assassin.

For my part, when I behold a fashionable table set out in all its magnificence, I fancy that I see gouts and dropsies, fevers and lethargies, with innumerable other distempers, lying in ambuscade among the dishes. — *Addison*.

LAURA BRIDGMAN.

[In order that the volumes of the Journal may contain a full account of this wonderful girl, we copy, at length, from the Fourteenth Report of the Asylum for the Blind, Dr. Howe's special report, embracing her last year's history. — Ed.]

To the Trustees.

GENTLEMEN ; My report concerning this interesting pupil for the last year will be shorter than usual, because I intend to publish soon a continuous and complete account of her whole course of instruction.

This seems to be called for by the public, who, in various countries, have manifested such a kindly interest in her case. The accounts of her instruction contained in our previous reports have been translated into several languages, and extensively read. But it is impossible to do justice to such a subject in detached papers, published annually. Besides, the series of those papers is not perfect ; large editions of some of our reports having been completely exhausted by the demand.

The importance of the case, in a psychological and moral point of view, justifies the attempt to put it upon permanent record. It is due also to the many kind and excellent persons who have manifested their sympathy for the child, and in various ways encouraged her teachers to perseverance, in the attempt to overcome all the obstacles to the full development of her imprisoned soul. The account of her progress during the last year will, therefore, be general and concise.

Her health has been good, until within the last three months, during which time her appetite has become impaired, she has lost some flesh, and has grown feeble. I have not been without apprehensions of serious consequences ; but as there is no appearance of any organic disease, it is reasonable to hope that the functional derangements will yield to judicious treatment.

The danger of the great and continual activity of her brain and nervous system has never been lost sight of ; and constant care has been taken to guard against its evil effects, by exercise, and by amusements calculated to diminish it. But it may be, that, in spite of our efforts, her system has suffered from this cause.

In the normal condition of the body, the constant hungering and thirsting of the youthful mind for knowledge is gratified by the spontaneous and pleasurable exercise of the perceptive faculties. The child has only to open his eyes, and learn, every day and every hour, new combinations of form, dimension, size, color, distance, and motion, among the innumerable objects around him. His ear and his other senses impart to his mind a thousand sensations, which, by a natural process, the mind, in its turn, attributes to external objects. All this process is one of learning ; the result of it is knowledge,—knowledge more varied and more valuable than any which a teacher can ever impart. It is the gymnastics of the mind ; and by virtue of that beautiful law which commands pleasure to attend all natural exercise, it becomes both delightful and health-giving.

But what to other children is spontaneous activity, or pleasant exercise, is to poor Laura severe effort and fatiguing labor. They see external nature as through a glass, and learn a thousand things at a glance ; — she has to break through a wall, and to examine every quality of every object by a slow and tedious effort. It is true that she takes delight in the effort, and has to be withheld from, rather than incited to, making it ; but, although there may be the same proportion between the degree of effort and the amount of pleasure as in other minds, yet both are in excess ; and excess in any thing is injurious.

It has always been strictly charged upon her teachers, and I am sure never forgotten by them, that they are to guard against too great mental activity. But it is almost impracticable to prevent her from studying, for her common conversation is in the spirit of inquiry ; so that it is possible her physical health has suffered from it. She will not admit that she is unwell ; indeed, she probably conceals from herself the fact that she is so. But, from whatever cause her present indisposition has arisen, every effort will be made to remove it. She has already learned to ride on horseback, and takes gentle exercise in this way, every day, upon a pony, which, of course, has to be guided by a seeing person.

Her mind has developed itself, during the last year, in a remarkable manner, as will be seen in the specimens of her writing and conversation. It is very fortunate that I was able to obtain as a successor to Miss Swift, — her former able and

excellent teacher,*—a young lady fully equal to the difficult task of conducting her education. Indeed, to Miss Swift and Miss Wight belong, far more than to any other persons, the pure satisfaction of having been instrumental in the beautiful development of Laura's character.

The last year, especially, has been one of great difficulty and great danger; for the period has arrived when the natural tendency of every human soul to separate and independent individualism becomes very strong,—that critical period when there is often a severe and sometimes a fatal struggle between the conservative spirit of the old, who would stunt the growth of the young and keep them in the dependence of childhood, and the aspiring spirit of the young, which irresistibly impels them to independence.

I have always looked forward to this period of Laura's life with great anxiety. She is now passing through it; and it is not given to me to conceive any wiser course than her present teacher has followed. Indeed, I believe that no one has conceived so high an idea of woman's patience, devotion, tenderness, and capacity, that it would not be raised, if he could see as minutely as I have seen the whole of them exemplified in the daily intercourse between Miss Wight and Laura. Any praise of this kind bestowed by one person upon another, who is in any way connected with him, is usually in bad taste, to say the least. But I am constrained to give it in this case, because I feel, that, unless I do so, I shall receive what does not belong to me,—the credit of another's good works.

There have been a few moments during the year, when, either from the developing tendency to independent individualism above alluded to, or from constitutional irritability, or both, Laura has manifested a spirit which threatened violent explosions of temper. I am certain that, if, at such times, she had been treated with the slightest sternness, or even with coldness and indifference, the effect would have been most unfavorable. But her teacher, never for a moment losing her temper, never ceasing to manifest the tenderest interest in her pupil, yet not *obtruding it upon her*, or making it the pretext for overruling her will, has succeeded in making Laura *judge and condemn herself*; so that, without being accused, she has perceived her fault, and, without being punished, she has come out of the trial stronger and better than before. This I hold to be a rare attainment in the art of teaching; it is more,—it is the best kind of moral training.

It will be seen by the extracts which will follow, that Laura has acquired much greater facility and copiousness of expres-

* It is possible that some remarks in my last report may have been construed into censure of Miss Swift; but they were not intended for that effect. She fulfilled her duty with ability and conscientiousness.

sion than before ; nevertheless, a great portion of the year has been spent in teaching her the use of language. It is often said that, in order to have precision of language, there must be precision of thought ; but the converse is equally true, — in order to have precision of thought, (over a great range of objects,) there must be precision of language. Hence appears the great importance of storing the mind abundantly with words to which a precise meaning is attached, during that period of life which nature clearly points out as the only one well fitted for the task, namely, the period of childhood and early youth.

It may be proper here to remark that, whenever any expression of hers is quoted in the reports concerning her, it is done with a sense of the importance of a scrupulous adherence to the exact form which she used ; no change and no correction is ever made, not even of the orthography.

I shall endeavor to make the extracts illustrate the mode of teaching her, as well as her own course of thought.

One day, her teacher had remarked to her that the first settlers of this country sometimes had difficulty in procuring enough to eat ; whereupon, she asked, suddenly, "What repast did one man eat?" She explained herself by adding, "When there was but one man on the earth." The answer was, that there were fruit and berries. "But," said she, "when he was very small?" She paused a while, and then added, "I guess God took care of him, and gave him some milk."

Her teacher was reading, the same day, something in which a compass was mentioned ; upon which she was desirous of knowing all about it. Her teacher showed her a magnet, and applied it to a toy in the shape of a swan floating upon the water. When she felt the bird to be attracted by the magnet, her face grew very red, and she said, much surprised, "It makes it life ; it is alive, for it moves." Her teacher then asked her if the bird ate, or slept, or walked, or could feel. "No," she replied ; but still seemed hardly convinced that the magnet did not give life to the bird, until she was shown its effect upon a needle.

This led to an explanation of attraction ; and she soon afterwards showed her disposition to apply all new words in as many senses as she can, by suddenly embracing her teacher, and saying, "I am exceedingly attracted to you, because you are always so kind."

A little reflection upon the mental process by which she converted a term expressive of a physical relation into one expressive of a mental emotion will explain the difficulty which many persons find, in understanding how she ever learned abstract terms, and words significative of mere emotions.

Laura, of course, cannot convert those terms which usually

express physical relations into terms expressive of moral relations, so easily as other young persons can; but in her case, as in theirs, the mental process is a natural and almost involuntary one. All children go through it without any special instruction, and use metaphorical language long before they know what a metaphor is.

The teacher plays a much humbler part in the intellectual development of children than he is usually supposed to do. His influence in the formation of moral character may be greater; but, too often, he labors upon the former to the neglect of the latter.

On the same day above referred to, she was speaking about something which recalled the past, and asked, "Why was I not always so good?" Not receiving an immediate answer, she added, "People cannot always do right, as one man did, who lived many years ago. Doctor says nobody ever does right always, as Jesus Christ did." Her teacher told her that we must always try to do perfectly right, and then we should grow better and better. She then asked, "If we are perfect, shall we be like God?"

The following extract from her teacher's journal will show how minutely her little faults are noted, and how they are treated.

"*Sunday, Nov. 10th.* Laura went to church with me in the morning. In the afternoon, I left Jane Damon with her, with permission to stay a short time. When I returned, Laura did not welcome me as usual, and made some objection to a walk which I proposed; but she was soon ready for it. I learned from Jane that Laura had done something that she, (Jane,) had promised not to tell me. I asked Laura why she was not willing that I should know every thing that she did while I was away. She said, 'I was afraid you would reprove me.' I asked her if I ever spoke unkindly to her when she had done wrong. 'No,' replied she, very emphatically, 'you never blame me. Why did I pull the wire?' I answered, that I thought curiosity and playfulness made her do it; that it was not wrong to be curious and playful, but that it was wrong to try to conceal from me when she thought she had done mischief. 'I did not know it was to conceal,' said she. I told her that it was best for me to know what she did and thought, that I might be able to advise her. 'I knew it was wrong to pull the wire.' Jane had told me also that Laura was unwilling that she should leave her, and made several very unpleasant noises. I alluded to this, when talking with Laura, and she said, 'I was not impatient.' 'But,' said I, 'Jane said you made some bad noises.' 'I did n—,' she began to say, hesitatingly; when I said, 'Did you not make noises?' and she replied, 'I believe I did not refrain from making bad noises.'

"I was now obliged to leave her for a short time. When I came back, she was not inclined to say much, and seemed trying to force a smile. By this time, the headache which had followed me all day became quite severe, and I left her again for a while to her reflections. It is the first time that she has attempted to deceive me. She was afraid, perhaps, that she had done some injury to something. She could have no fear that I should speak severely to her, for I never blame her in the least. Generally, when she is doing or saying any little thing that I disapprove, I simply stop it at the time, and afterwards speak of the thing abstractly. She will apply my remarks to herself and to the circumstance, but without any unpleasant excitement of feeling, and she remembers them a long time.

"Many times she has said, 'I cannot be perfectly good, as Jesus Christ was.' I have told her that every one should try to be perfectly good, and never be

willing to do wrong even in a little thing, — explained to her that perhaps it was a desire to *appear* perfectly good which prompted her to conceal that which she was afraid was wrong.

"When I spoke to her again, she said, 'I was praying to God, and told him that I had been so wrong; and I asked him to forgive me and send me better thoughts. I told him my motives were bad, to conceal from you, and to tell you that I did not make impatient noises.' She then put her hand on my hot head, and asked what made it worse. I answered, 'Sad thoughts.' She said, 'I am sorry you were detained from being happy by a sad circumstance. I have told God that I will not do so wrong again.'"

Here is another extract illustrative of the same thing.

"Oct. 24th. At eight o'clock to-day, Laura came to me and said, 'Doctor wants you to teach me about motives. What are motives?'

"After giving the meaning of the word, I referred her to a story that I read to her last evening. It was of a benevolent, kind-hearted little boy, who expended his money in purchasing little comforts for those who needed them, making it his happiness to do good to the poor and unfortunate. She was very much interested in talking of the character of the boy, and of his sister and mother. 'It was a good motive for George to give nice things to poor people.' 'Doctor had a good motive to give us this nice large room to be so warm and comfortable; he is very benevolent. But Jesus Christ was the most benevolent; we cannot be benevolent as he was.' 'I cannot be benevolent, and do kind things to crazy people, and blind and deaf people, and cure them.' 'God is very benevolent; he does so many things to make people happy.' I then tried to show her how she might be truly benevolent, in little things, every day. 'I give away many things,' said she. I convinced her that it was not always a proof of *benevolence* to give things away. During the whole lesson she was very serious and thoughtful, pressing my fingers closely, so that no letter should escape her.

"Friday, Oct. 25th. Laura seemed to me very rude and boisterous, and not easily restrained as usual. It was very discouraging to me, and I gave myself up to sad thoughts. Laura soon perceived it, and asked why. I told her she did not try, so much as I wished, to grow still and gentle, though we had talked so much about it. She sat still some time, and then said, 'I love Mrs. Smith best, she is so gentle.' This was evidently said to trouble me, and did not relieve me any. This is one of the very few instances when there seemed to be unkindness in the child's heart.

"But she soon repented. After dinner, she was up stairs, and was gone for some time; when at last she came down and found me, she said she had a nice present for me to make me more happy, and that she would try more to improve. She said this very sadly. I took her present, and exerted myself to appear as cheerful as usual.

"The present she brought was a pincushion, one of her choicest treasures.

"Lessons as usual. Talking with Laura about being kind and benevolent. She began to give me a long account of little kind things that she had done. After a time, I told her that sometimes people did kind things that their friends might praise them, and think they were very kind and benevolent.

"We talked of it some time, Laura's face growing more and more red, yet half smiling. I could see she was applying the remark to herself, as, indeed, she does every thing that she hears of this kind. 'Why do I like to be praised?' she soon asked. I told her that every one did, and that it was right for us to like to have our friends love us, and praise us too, if we were good. Supposed the case of two little children, one of whom was very kind to his sisters that his mother might call him good, and the other did the same because he was glad to see all happy, &c. Asked her which she thought was the best child. She hesitated a moment, and replied, 'The boy who wanted to see other children happy.'"

There may be better ways of correcting such faults in children, but there are, certainly, many worse ones in frequent use. Punishment of the common kind, even that of rebuke,

might have driven Laura into a habit of deceit which would lead to duplicity, and which could hardly be cured, except by herself after her conscience had become active and strong. But it will be seen that this very habit prevents the growth of conscience, and too often dwarfs it forever.

This is a subject which cannot be considered too much or too carefully, for the neglect of it lies at the bottom of much of the evil in society.

The will and the conscience are twin-born; and the exercise of the will should be made to promote the growth and strength of the conscience, as the exercise of the muscles promotes the growth and strength of the bones which support them.

If we forbid children to exercise their own free-will, if we command them to heed our will alone, then we should also supply them with our conscience, and make that the companion of our will. But this is evidently impossible; consequently, we often punish children because they do not follow our way; and we neglect the training of their conscience, and then punish them because it does not guide them aright.

Parents have a right to expect obedience from their children in all important matters; moreover, it is their duty to require it; but they have no right to forget or neglect their own duty to them. Nature gives to children feebleness of will to fit them for this obedience which we fail not to require; and she gives them feebleness of conscience, that our conscience may be for a while their guide, and keep them from undue temptation; but this latter duty we often neglect.

Truth is plainer, and more agreeable to children, than falsehood, and right than wrong. They have a conscience, too, which tells them which to prefer; but it is feeble, because Nature did not intend they should rely solely upon it at first, any more than, when giving them a will, she intended that they should be independent of us.

They have also many faculties and desires; and if these are abused in any way, they may become passions which the feeble conscience cannot resist. Most children are as pure as Eve was; but the tempting apples are left hanging so thickly around them, that it would be a marvel if they did not eat.

Children incline to tell the truth, and will tell it unless some stronger desire, as fear, (that is, temptation,) induces them to lie. The general error is in supposing they have no conscience; whereas, it has perhaps been neglected, or we have allowed it to suffer a strain greater than it would bear.

Numerous as are the apparent exceptions to this, they do not affect the correctness of the principle. The laws of descent influence the moral tendencies as well as the bodily forms of children; a man may entail his dwarfed conscience, as he may

his diminutive nose, upon his descendants. 'Thousands of parents "have eaten sour grapes," and millions of children "have their teeth set on edge." But take the descendants of truly moral ancestors, in a moral society, and if they are "trained up in the way they should go, they will not depart from it."

I do not believe that Laura Bridgman is so happily organized as many other children. I think she has some constitutional disturbing forces which do not affect others. Nevertheless, I am confident that, for many years, she has never varied from the truth, nor swerved from the right, unless under the influence of what were, to her, strong temptations. That such temptations were not kept from her is my fault, or the fault of those circumstances which keep us all so far from perfection.

We must not bind upon her, nor upon other children, greater burdens than they can bear; but if we will act upon the principle, that the mind can be trained to perceive moral relations as quickly as it does material relations, we shall enable her and them to walk uprightly through life. I will illustrate my meaning by a reference to the process of training the mind to the study of arithmetic.

There are certain immutable relations of numbers, and by long and close attention to these the mind sees, as it were by intuition, what before was incomprehensible. A child, at first, does not understand the relation between *two* and *three*, or that, when united, they make *five*; but by dissecting the *five*, — by counting upon his fingers, by taking *five* objects and putting *three* in one heap and *two* in another and then uniting them, or in other ways, — the relation is *demonstrated* to the child, and his mind ever after assents to it as a matter of course. But it is by no means a matter of course at first; and the mental faculty by which the relations of number are perceived requires greater or less training, according to its natural capacity.

It is certain that 333 multiplied by 555 make 184,815; and one whose natural faculty for perceiving the relations of numbers is extraordinarily active, or one that has been long and carefully trained, will see it as quickly as we perceive that *three* and *two* make *five*. Not so, however, with a common and untrained mind; such a one would have to *dissect* the numbers as the child dissects *five*, and arrive at the result by two or more lines of proof, before there would be a certainty of the correctness of the result.

Now, the *moral* relations of things are not less certain and immutable than their numerical relations. We think we see the right and wrong on certain questions intuitively and without training; but we have to go through very much the same exercise of the faculty by which we see it, as we did before we perceived the relation between *two* and *five*. On other sub-

jects, where the disturbing force of interest, prejudice, or passion, interferes, we cannot see the true moral relations of questions at once, any more than we can at first see the result of 333 multiplied by 555 ; but, by careful training of the conscience with the intellect, we can at last attain to it.

A merchant will tell, by a glance at the balance-sheet, what is his share of the year's profit of his house, — a process for which a schoolboy would require his slate and pencil. But perhaps there have been transactions of doubtful morality, during the year's business, which the well-trained conscience of a schoolboy would solve at a glance, but which the merchant could hardly decide even with the aid of a *moral slate and pencil*.

By observing such principles as these, and by being mindful always that Laura has a conscience, which, like the consciences of most children, if not yet fully developed, may be so trained as to be firmly relied upon, her teachers and friends may reasonably expect that, when grown to maturity, she will show great firmness of character.

Let it not be supposed that the foregoing instances of unamiable conduct are given as specimens of Laura's general conduct ; so far from it, they are very uncommon exceptions to her usual kind and conscientious deportment. I give them for two reasons ; because I would faithfully describe what so many are interested to see in all its lights, and because the lesson may be useful to others.

It is a curious case, this of* Laura's. A poor blind and deaf girl, of humble history and humbler hopes, unconscious of being the object of special regard, and yet every act and word carefully noted down, and more eagerly looked for by thousands, in various parts of the world, than those of purple-born princesses ! And yet it may not be a solitary case. It may be that each one of us is watched over with tender interest by guardian spirits, — that "all our faults are observed, conned and scanned by rote, and set in a note book," not, perhaps, "to be cast in our teeth," but to serve the great purposes of truth and good.

Could Laura be suddenly restored to her senses, and clothed with our faculties and intellect, which so far transcend hers, she would stand amazed to find herself the centre of so much observation. She would look fearfully and anxiously back, to recall all her past thoughts and deeds, and perhaps painfully repent that some of them had not been better. So it may be with us, when the clog of the flesh shall be removed from those faculties and powers that so far transcend those of the body. We may find that what we whispered in secret was heard through the universe, — what we did in the darkness was seen as at noonday. But it is better for her and for us that it should be as it is ; that we should shun the wrong, not because others

may punish us, and do the right, not because others may reward us, but because the one is good and the other is bad.

Laura has often amused herself, during the past year, by little exercises in composition. The following story, written during the absence of her teacher, will serve as a specimen of her use of language. The last sentence, though not grammatical, may be considered as the moral, and a very good moral, of the whole.

"THE GOODNATURED GIRL —

"Lucy was merely nine years old. She had excellent parents. She always did with alacrity what her mother requested her to do. She told Lucy when it was time for her to go to school; so Lucy ran and put on her bonnet and shawl and then she went back to her mama. She offered Lucy a basket containing some pie and cake for luncheon. And Lucy went precisely at school-time and when she got to the house she took her own seat and began to study diligently with all the children. And she always conformed to her teachers wishes — In recess she took luncheon out of her basket but she gave some of it to her mates — Lucy had some books with pictures and slate in her desk —

"When she went home she found that dinner was all ready — Afterwards her mother took her to take tea with her friends. Lucy was much delighted to play with her little cousins Lucy and Helen; and they let her see their play things. After tea Lucy was sorry to depart; and when she went to bed she thought that she had made it pleasantly to all her friends with little joyful heart."

Laura keeps a sort of diary, in which she writes with her own hand an account of what passes every day. It is generally a bald narration of the facts; but an extract will give an idea of her daily routine of study. The diary is generally very legibly written. I will transcribe a day's record, exactly as she wrote it, with her spelling and punctuation, putting any explanations that may be necessary in brackets. The only alteration is in the use of capitals, which she has never been taught to make.

"SIXTH OF JAN TUESDAY.

"I studied arithmetic before my breakfast. Afterwards Miss Wight was occupied for Dr. till quarter to ten. Then she read to me about Bible. Abraham went to live in the city Gerar. He and his wife lived in the western corner of Palestine place [country.] But his son Isaac was very kind to comfort his parents when they grew old [.] Isaac was always good to take care of them and made them feel very happy. Abraham thanked God for his kindness exceedingly.

"Wight taught me two more lessons geography and history. Putnam was a farmer who was ploughing his land with the cattle in a field. When tidings were brought to him of a battle at Lexington he did not stop to unharness the cattle but ran very rapidly to his home and went to live in Boston. In a few weeks thirty thousand of soldiers arrived to Boston. Most of them had no cannons nor leads nor guns. And the British went to Bunker Hill from Boston to attack the Americans and expel them away when they were going to fire upon them. And when the British saw them ready they were surprised."

Her store of knowledge has been very much increased during the last year. It will be seen, too, that she has improved in the use of language; and when it is considered that other deaf mutes have as great advantage over her as we

have over them, if not greater, her style will bear comparison with theirs.

She has become somewhat more thoughtful and sedate than formerly, though she is generally very cheerful, and sometimes displays a childish humor that shows her age is to be measured by the degree of her mental development, rather than by the number of years that she has lived.

She has extended the circle of her acquaintance, and has endeared herself to many persons who have learned to converse with her. It is the earnest hope of all that her life may be prolonged, and that we may be enabled to do our duty to her and to ourselves, by making it as happy and as useful as possible.

S. G. HOWE.

FROM THE CHINESE ART OF HEALTH. — Let hunger regulate your food, and never eat too much at once ; excessive eating tires the stomach, and produces many diseases.

Never think of drinking unless you are dry, and then merely quench your thirst ; too much drink corrupts the blood, and may cause dropsy.

Take an early breakfast, and do not go out of doors fasting, particularly when the air is hot or foul.

Let your breakfast be moderate ; do not overload your stomach with meats in the morning.

About noon eat a hearty meal of plain, wholesome food, and let it be neither too pungent nor too salt.

Avoid salted meat, fish, and other salted food ; they injure the blood, the heart, and the lungs, and cause an unnatural thirst for too much liquids, which drown the stomach.

Beware of pungent food ; it burns the palate, the stomach, and the bowels.

Sour food is very improper ; it produces crudities, acidity, colics, and indigestion.

Eat meat only when it is hot ; when cold, it is of heavy digestion.

Eat slowly, and chew your food well. To eat in a hurry, is to eat like a dog or a wolf.

Seldom gratify your appetite to its full extent ; for you may overload your stomach, and thus gradually impair its digestive powers.

Eat no meats of hard digestion, and be careful to avoid those that are half raw or not well cooked. Very fat meat, and that which is dressed with much pepper and spices, is more injurious than nourishing.

[THE COMMON SCHOOL JOURNAL is published semi-monthly, by WILLIAM B. FOWLE, No. 138½ Washington Street, up stairs, (opposite School Street,) Boston. HORACE MANN, Editor. Price, One Dollar a year, payable in advance.]